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ABSTRACT

This booklet, which is designed to help parents make informed choices about the games and toys they purchase for their children, uses manufacturers' descriptions of their products to inform parents about the themes of toys intended for use in violent pretend play, and provides information about alternatives to excessively violent toys. Briefly discussed in the text are play and imagination, children's play in the 1980s, effects of televised violence, and the increase in the manufacture of violence-promoting toys. Also provided is a set of eight guidelines parents can use in selecting toys. Descriptions of violent toys, most of which were transcribed directly from toy boxes or marketing promotion material, are quotes or close paraphrases. They include such mottos as "Cries and screams are music to my ears," and "The sight of ruin only makes me crave more." To alert parents to potential dangers ascribed to some role-playing games, examples of types of characters described in various game instruction books are provided. The list of non-violent, alternative toys includes construction and action toys which encourage imaginative play. Concluding sections offer an annotated list of catalogs of alternative toys of positive play value, and lists of: (1) actions recommended for parents who wish to be involved in their children's play and television viewing; and (2) resources and organizations. (RH)

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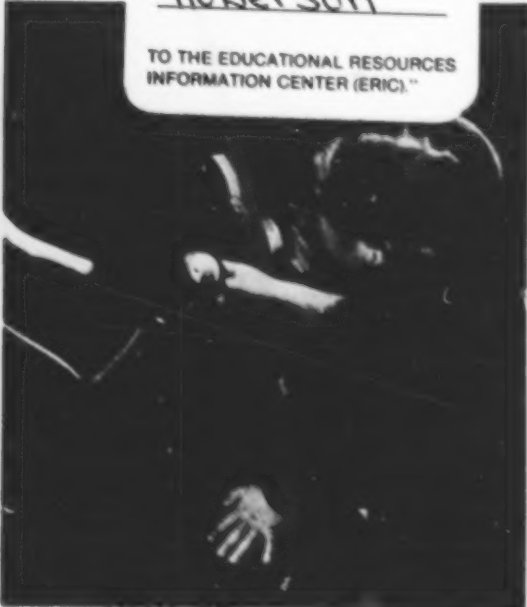
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Parents Guide to Non-Violent Toy-Buying

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Blessed are the Peacemakers...

The Department of Human Welfare of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church is pleased to publish this booklet. The research and development time and energy that went into its creation was provided by a team of church-related and university-related child development professionals. The Department of Human Welfare has worked with these professionals for the past few years as they have studied the needs of parents whose children are regularly confronted with images of violence in our society.

The General Board of Church and Society is co-sponsoring with Action for Children's Television the National Children's TV Awareness Campaign for 1986-87. The purpose of this campaign is to enable families to emphasize their moral values and ethics that differ from many of the messages coming from our media. We offer this booklet for study, action and reflection.

Beverly Roberson Jackson, Ed.D.
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Purpose of Handbook

Today, as never before, there is such a proliferation of toys and games being marketed for children that it is nearly impossible for parents to know a great deal about each one. Parents should never assume that since a toy or game is developed primarily for children it will automatically have a positive effect on them.

The increasingly greater numbers of toys with violent themes, accompanied by developed philosophies of world domination, world destruction, and survivalism, are cause for concern to those who agree that ideas can have a formative effect on people exposed to them. Children are particularly vulnerable to a repetition of these ideas if fed to them in massive quantities.

As yet, violent "theme toys" are so new that no one knows what their effect might be. However, we need to look at the ideas they present and ask if we want our children to imitate those ideas in play.

Parents and their children come from all walks of life with differing value systems; it is not our goal to change them. The purpose of this booklet is (1) to use the manufacturers' descriptions of their products to help parents know the themes of toys before they see them in the toy store, and (2) to let parents know about alternatives to the excessively violent toys. With this information parents can make informed choices about the games and toys they get for their children.

Play and Imagination

What is play? Why do we have to question an activity as basic as play? Play is something that we have long taken for granted that children do without any instruction, something as natural to them as learning to breathe, walk and talk.

Play can be both structured and unstructured. It is often an opportunity for children to explore and interact with the world at their own pace. It is an opportunity for a patterning of the imagination where the ideas and ideals of the adult mind take their initial form. During play, children learn to confront problems; they learn acceptance, responsibility, self-expression, creativity, reciprocity, caring and loving. Children also gain the ability to try out different roles and learn the principle of trust.

If the opportunities which parents allow for children are not providing them with the products of positive, constructive play, then parents must question those opportunities. What motives, parents must ask, lie behind "play" which is more destructive than constructive in the values those opportunities pattern for a child's imagination?

Child's Play in the 80's

Child's play in the 80's looks significantly different to some specialists from what has gone before. In this decade, it appears that play is less physical, more computerized and more isolated. A CBS news report, entitled "No Time for Childhood," alleged that children's free time is taken up largely with planned activities organized by adults, and that young children are too restricted by technologically programmed activities. If these are valid allegations, what will be the effect on children?

If children's play activities have changed in the manner described above, one could expect the following effects: *inactive* children do not discover what they are able to do; lack of exercise in early years causes them to be less fit; and lack of rough and tumble play causes them to be less independent, lacking confidence in their own strengths. Children dominated by *remote control*, relying on adults or machines for direction, are unable to risk their own

ideas. They are likely to learn only one game, "follow the leader," and would be expected to be less able mentally and less independent than if they had been free participants in group play. *Isolated* children will lack sensitivity and the ability to resolve interpersonal conflict constructively. Such children will be more vulnerable to mental stress and more easily manipulated than children who have companions in play.

Positive play activities are based on interaction and imagination, as many child development experts have indicated. Current trends in our society, well-buttressed by commercial interests among toy manufacturers and TV programmers, tend to promote "play by script" activities, making it difficult for the child to have a chance for self-expression or original thought. If this trend continues, there may well be a decrease in creative play and independent thinking among children.

Television Violence: What Effect?

Is there a significant impact on children's behavior as a result of watching violence on television? If so, is our reaction one of complacency or apathy? How will parents react to the following information?

- Preschoolers who watched violent Saturday morning television shows for 11 days demonstrated a sharp increase in aggression, i.e., hitting, pushing, kicking, choking, etc., some even tripling their violent behavior.

- Children who watched soap operas changed their play action from, "You be the daddy and I'll be the mommy," to "You are pregnant by him, you run away with him, and you get shot."

- Of children interviewed at Longwood College in Virginia, 44 percent revealed a stronger attachment to the television than to their fathers.

- There are, on the average, 100,000 violent television episodes viewed by children by the time they enter college; the average child spends more time watching television than in pursuing educational endeavors.

- The types of television programming directly affect the moral development of the child, which in turn is influential in that child's development

into an adult.

- By substituting television viewing with various games, books, and creative toys, positive values and behavioral traits can be developed.

Parents do have a choice. They can choose to be an active participant in their children's behavior and moral development. They can responsibly monitor the types of programming their children watch as well as the time spent in viewing.

Violence-Promoting Toys on the March

In 1982, Hasbro launched a \$4 million advertising campaign to promote the introduction of its miniature soldier, G.I. Joe. The promotion was calculated to reach 95 percent of all male children in the United States between the ages of five and eight more than 50 times each. This resulted in \$40 to \$50 million in sales in 1982. Since then, sales of violence-oriented toys have increased from an overall \$186 million in 1982 to an estimated \$1.2 billion in 1985. Seven of the United States' 10 most popular toys at the end of the 1985 buying season were violence-oriented war toys. Eighty-five percent of all new cartoon programming is war oriented, funded by the various toy companies to promote their products. Since research shows that violent storylines and violent character toys can promote an increase in violent play in children, parents need to question whether toy manufacturers always have the best interest of children in mind.

The complexity of the toys promoted indicates that a good deal of thought and understanding of the behavior and motivation of children have gone into the designs of the toys and storylines that promote them. Boys may tend to be particularly vulnerable to having their imagination programmed. The director of marketing of one of the leading toy companies has said: "Boys tend to require fantasy in their play. If a toy does not come complete with a storyline, most boys today are not interested." The senior vice-president of operations for the same company said: "The average age of boys who play with trucks has dropped from ten to five, and the age of true imaginative play has dropped accordingly. Imagination is now limited to the very young—those not exposed to Saturday morning tele-

vision." Parents must ask: If manufacturers and advertisers understand this about children, why do they create and promote toys and storylines which encourage violence, fear, and killing?

Since the best interest of children is not the main concern of most toy manufacturers, more responsibility to screen toys falls on the parent(s) and those who work with children. It is impossible to shelter a child from all negative effects of the commercial whims of the modern world. With the constant media hype and peer pressure on children to prefer toys which promote negative behavior, what is a parent to do?

Guidelines for Selecting Toys

Here is a set of guidelines that a parent may find helpful in selecting toys.

1. Look the toys over carefully and think about its purpose. What will the child be learning or imitating from the use of this toy?

2. *Read the packaging!* What is the attitude toward life promoted by this toy?

3. What is the toy's play value? Can it be used again and again in a variety of ways? Is it appropriate for this child's age level? Will it isolate the child or assist him/her in social development?

4. Does it help the child to develop imagination without him/her being lost in a world of overwhelming fantasy?

5. Does it assist the child in learning to cope with and bring order to the real world?

6. Would I feel comfortable being involved in the child's play with this toy?

7. Are the concepts presented by the toy appropriate for the child?

8. What are the values promoted by the toy? Does it promote concern for humankind? Does it allow for the *development* of positive values? Is it in tune with what I want my child to grow up to be?

Toys With Violent Themes

This section provides parents with a fairly representative list of the different kinds of violent theme toys on the market today. It can save parents a lot of time and frustration when shopping. Most descriptions have come directly from toy boxes or marketing promotional material and are quotes or close paraphrases. Other descriptions come from promotional story books, television shows or movies.

• Hasbro Bradley, Inc., Pawtucket, RI.

Includes: *Transformers*, \$5.99 - \$15.99

Motto: "More than meets the eye." There are at least 113 different varieties of these and more varieties are regularly put on the market. The overwhelming majority of them are violence-oriented with destruction and killing as their focus. They change from robots to vehicles, spaceships, dinosaurs, tanks, etc., and have a description and saver card on the back of each which has the motto of the particular toy and its philosophy of life. An animated TV show promotes these toys.

Examples of descriptions on boxes:

Hook - "Strives for perfection even if others have to suffer. . . Snobbish, supercilious, unpopular perfectionist."

Bonecrusher - "Hit it till it stands no taller than dust." "Rubble-strewn wasteland is his idea of beautiful landscape. His wild ways create fear and terror." As a vehicle he carries a short-range concussion bomb launcher. As a robot he carries a laser pistol.

Soundwave - Function: "communication." Motto: "Cries and screams are music to my ears."

Buzzsaw - Function: "spy." Motto: "My bite is worse than my bark." "Civil and sophisticated yet very cruel and destructive. Approaches his lethal tasks like a fine artist. Each deadly mission is like working on a new masterpiece."

Ransack - Motto: "The sight of ruin only makes me crave more." "Unconcerned about the safety of innocents. . . will level an entire town to hunt down an enemy. . . always looking forward to the next battle."

Kickback - Motto: "Friend is another word for fool." ". . . charming, but cruelly clever. . . makes friends so he can influence them to do his bidding

by digging up facts he can hold against them. Humans particularly susceptible to this insecticon."

Bombshell - Motto: "The mind is my playpen."
". . . can turn foes into helpless accomplices by injecting cerebo-shells into their head (robot or human) with his stinger. . . gives him control of their minds. . . has a cruel sense of humor. . . arms himself by having his victims debase themselves."

Hasbro Bradley also manufactures *G.I. Joe* (Two armies - G.I. "strike force" and Cobra.)

A television show, game cards, and comic books encourage children to want toy sets. Examples of descriptions on boxes are:

Flint - "Rhodes Scholar earned his degree in English Literature. Bored by the Groves of Academe, he enlisted in the Army. . ."

Lady Jaye - a U.S. covert operations spy who "can easily pass for a Russian, German, or Afghan . . . can squat down with a basket of oranges in any Middle Eastern market."

Bazooka - a U.S. tank driver who becomes an armor rocket launcher specialist, "expert in the Dragon Anti-Tank Missiles and all Warsaw Pact RPG systems."

Cobra Elite Trooper - of the Crimson Guard. Is into espionage and has "an initiation ceremony too hideous for description. . . That friendly neighbor of yours might just have a red uniform in his closet."

G.I. Joe toys come with mines, mortars, grenade launchers, laser rifles, pistols, AK-47 attack rifles, dragonov sniper rifles, ground to air missiles.

Hasbro Bradley manufactures *Inhumanoids* as well. Examples are:

D. Compose - "Anything he touches turns into a rotting skeleton mutation."

Meltar - "Meltar is the undisputed leader of the inhumanoids. His only reason for existence is to control the entire world."

Tendril - "Tendril is the most barbaric of the inhumanoid horde. He enjoys crushing his helpless victims with his powerful green tentacles."

• **Tonka Toys Corp., Spring Park, MN 55384**

Includes: *Go-Bots* - 75-plus varieties of robots like:

A-Tak - a killer robot on rails.

Cy-Kill - a huge monster robot that fires smashing arms.

Leader-1 - an attack jet fighter for killing the enemy. These good and evil robots "came from



planet GoBotron, the GoBot invasion of Earth continues with good and evil locked in mortal combat, the fate of millions hangs in the balance." Stak of the Friendly GoBots army is a truck that "when provoked, becomes a formidable fighter. . . going into a rage to attack enemy GoBots to help good triumph over evil."

Steel Monsters - "The Only Survivors." Vehicles and figures with a future setting, the marketing booklet describes "a genetic disaster has spread bacteria throughout the world, leaving a desert wasteland where only the strong survive!" Vehicles are black and neutral colored, emblazoned with red blood/flame designs with names such as "blaster," "enforcer," assassin," "executioner," "bomber," and "destroyer" scratched across them. Also have tough characters to accompany them.

"An experimental lab explodes, sending microscopic mutations into the earth's atmosphere. This man-made bacteria spreads throughout the world, contaminating everything it touches. As the dust settles, four men roam the desolate world in rebuilt remnant vehicles known as Steel Monsters. Two good and two evil, each traveler commands his own customized machine, living in the knowledge that only the fittest will survive."

Rock Lords - "Powerful Living Rocks Face A Deadly New Peril" Magmar: "Silence that cursed boulder! He'll feel my wrath yet! Quartex will be mine forever. . . and sooner than he dares imagine!"

"Rock Lords conceal themselves as stones and reveal themselves as warriors. Each Rock Lord possesses his own rock-tech weapon, which endows him with power and energy."

"The evil rogue, Magmar, leader of the insurgents, is intent on. . .conquering each Rockworld Kingdom, one by one. Boulder, a Rock Lord on the highest status, must gather an army to stop him."

• **LJN Telepictures Corp., 250 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.** Includes: *Voltron* - 15 small attack toys combine to form the all-powerful *Voltron*. All toys come armed and ready for war. A complete *Voltron* is \$69.88 or the small toys can be purchased separately. There is also *Voltron II* and *III*.

Thundercats - feature sword and dagger fighting good guys led by the White Lion-O against evil bad guys led by Mumra, whose goal is to use power for evil purposes and control everything.

A new "assortment features six good and six evil characters from the TV show. The Tundercats and their friends are ready to use their powers to defend **THIRD EARTH**. The Mutants are trying to destroy the Thundercats, obtain the Swords of Omens and control **THIRD EARTH**. Each figure features **Battle-matic** action and each comes with an accessory weapon."

Mumm-Ra's Tomb Fortress - "The most important Mutant environment, where Mumm-Ra lives and plots the destruction of the Thundercats. It is here that Mumm-Ra mysteriously transforms. Place Mumm-Ra in his mummy state, into the crypt altar and he magically changes into the giant, all-powerful Mumm-Ra figure. The tomb is guarded by glowing eyes of the Skull Altar and two Mutant statue guards."

• **Mattel, Hawthorne, California 90250.** Includes: *She-Ra* (Princess of Power), *Catra* (Jealous Beauty), *Double Trouble* (Double Agent). War intrigue playset for the girl market features a variety of warring females who use magic powers.

Masters of the Universe - (\$4.99) Has TV show to promote the toy. Mixes violent and pro-social

themes. *He-Man* never kills the bad guys but does destroy evil robots. In almost every episode, He-Man and the forces of good defeat evil through force and violence. The hero is a blonde, white male. Most villains are dark-skinned. Examples of characters are: *Trap Jaw* - "Evil and armed for combat;" *Two Bad* - "Double-headed evil strategiest;" *He-Man* - "Most powerful man in the universe;" *Stinkor* - "Evil master of odors" (really stinks). Each figure comes with a book.

Examples of accessories are:

Slime Pit - "This evil pit of gruesome ooze has a fearsome claw that can trap a warrior. The skull-head opens up to coat the warrior with Slime."

Bashasaurus - "Nothing can stand in the way of this heroic vehicle! By pushing a button, children can make the "Basherball" slam down. For even more fun, they can make the telescoping arm move forward for extended smashing."

Also made by Matel are:

Wheeled Warriors - "Monster Minds Gone Mad."

Examples of descriptions from boxes:

KO-Kruiser - "Cruisin' for a bruisin' and programmed to destroy."

Saw Boss - Monster Minds tyrant. "Sinister saw with a 'mind' of its own. To become head of the Monsters Minds groups you have to get rid of the old leader and that's what Saw boss did."

• Kenner, Affil. General Mills, GPG Products Corp., Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Includes: "*Centurions "Power X Treme"* - action figures set in the 21st century equipped with various forms of weaponry to destroy "Dr. Terror and his evil sidekick Hacker."

Dr. Terror - "They're ruthless! They stop at nothing! They're the evil Dr. Terror and his brutally strong henchman, Hacker. A notorious yet brilliant evil genius, Dr. Terror fused half his body to a powerful computer called Syntax. Now programmed for the ultimate evil, he and Syntax challenge the Centurions to a fight to rule the world."

Detonator - "Detonater, a heavy attack arsenal, comes with a Range Finder, Sonic Ray Guns, a Front Assault Pak Module with Pulsating Freeze Ray Blasters, a Back Assault Pak Module capable of activating weapons systems, 2 Modular Spicer Missiles and a Sonic Screen! Its many modes in-

clude "Air Attack" and "Ground Assault."

Kenner also makes the *Mask* series - "Illusion is the ultimate weapon." Condor Vehicle, Vampire Vehicle, Piranha Vehicle, Switchblade Vehicle, etc.

Example: "Outlaw Vehicle - Oil tankers are imposing enough, but the DEMON OUTLAW is outright lethal. The tanker top rotates back to reveal the powerful rattler fire howitzer which swivels up or down, and side to side, and which can fire long-range poison pod shells (2 included). . .the outlaw comes with two articulated figures: the megalomaniac, Miles Mayhem with removable Python mask which pretends to send out coiled tentacles to entrap enemy agents, and NASH Gorey, the counter-espionage agent of VENOM."

Super Powers Collection (also Kenner) - \$4.97. Comic book is included plus card with characteristics of each figure. For example:

"*Joker* - Powers: twisted criminal that engineers brilliant crimes and chillingly cunning murders. Weaknesses: mortal. Is completely insane. Is almost compelled to commit crime. Enemies: Batman and Robin."

• **Galoob, Lewis Galoob, Inc., San Francisco, California 94080.**

Includes: *Golden Girl and the Guardians of the Gemstones*. "Golden Girl and the Guardians of the Gemstones is the first action figure concept designed specifically for a previously overlooked market segment that comprises a full third of action figure sales—today's young girls. . .As if being beautiful was not enough, we gave each figure its own costume, weapon, and gem-studded shield that may be worn as a broach."

Dragon Queen, Ruler of Evil Forces "and her trusted followers are cruel, yet strong and smart. Very capable of mean dark magic."

Galoob also makes *Defenders of the Earth, Skull Copter* - a human-like skull makes up the body of this helicopter.

A-Team (Galoob) - flies the U.S. flag and comes with mortars, bazookas, flame throwers, machine guns, M-16s and demolition pack. Python is "big and angry. B.A. Baracus is the only man who could put him down." Cobra is a demolition commando; Rattler is a street fighter. An Armored Car is for sale with rotating guns and a Tow Missile Launcher. A-Team Command Chopper, Tactical Warfare

Van, and A-Team Combat Headquarters.

• **Coleco Industries, Inc., Amsterdam, NY 12010.**

Includes: *Rambo, Fire-power Rambo, Col. Trautman, Turbo, K.A.T., White Dragon, Black Dragon, S.A.V.A.G.E., Gen. Warhawk, Sgt. Havoc, Nomad, Gripper, Mad Dog.*

Rambo Doll - "When the army can't, Rambo can! Rambo is America's ultimate weapon—unequaled in courage, unfailing in patriotism, he is a man who knows no defeat. His strength and skill allow him to accomplish dangerous missions that no ordinary man would attempt. Martial arts, weapons, explosives—Rambo is master of all! He fights for America, but most of all, for Justice! . . ."

S.A.V.A.G.E. Strike Cycle - "Allowing the driver to fight while maneuvering through the city. . . is the meanest motorcycle on the road! City streets turn into a combat zone when this road demon is burning rubber, especially when Mad Dog engages the 'Maniac,' a conceal-and-reveal minigun! Behind the secondary engine are six high-explosive Belgian rocket grenades. . ."

• **ARCO Industries, Ltd., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.**

Includes: *Rambo guns, grenades, rocket-launchers* (have photos from Rambo movie on back of packages), *UZI Commando Gun and knife.*

• **H.G. Toys, Long Beach, N.Y. 11561.**

Includes: *UZI Guns and dart games.*

• **Fishel Toys, Ltd., Hong Kong.**

Includes: *AK-47 automatic rifle.*

• **Fisher Price, East Aurora, N.Y. 10451.**

Includes: "*Construx Alien Series* - The Allen Series includes toys with names such as "Battle-strike," "Allien Fighter," "Darkstar Fighter" and "Phantom Assault."

Military Series - Mobile Missiles "contains all of the special military action pieces: machine guns, 2-stage rockets, cannons, camouflage panels and more."

• **Playjour Inc., Room 1024, 200 5th Ave., N.Y. 10010.**

Includes: *Capsela Space Links No. 850 Robotic; No. 670 Dyna Force; No. 860 Cosmic Force; No. 53*

Command Station; No. 805 Space Hawk; No. 835 Rocketron. Other models in the Spack Link series offer an opportunity for adventure without emphasis on weapons.

• **Tomy Corp., 901 223rd St., Carson, California 90745.**

Includes: *Wastors-Starriors* - \$4.99. Man is forced to abandon the surface of the world and lives underground while "destructors" and "wastors" guard the earth's surface. Destructors turn against man. There is a battle for the earth's control. Marvel comics depict the battle.

BADOX - "The name says it all."

RADOX - "Radox is looking for a fight! Step aside, or his flapping wings will bash you. His gaping mouth will snatch you. His clawful hooves will flatten you."

Tomics.

Includes: "Rotary Commander," "Treadmaster," "Fleetforce," "Detector,"—Robots which carry a multitude of weapons and change into vehicles and airplanes.

Tyco's Racing Line.

Includes: *The Racing Warriors* battle the *Deadly Car Crusher*. Electric racing set features two new obstacles for slot-car racing; the Deadly Car Crusher and the Collision Crossing. Deadly Car Crusher lumbers along the track and offers the racers the options of jumping over its rotating claws, speeding beneath them, or getting crushed.



• **INTEN Recreation Corp., P.O. Box 1440, Long Beach, California 90801.**

Includes: *Challengers* feature a variety of hand-held guns which are modeled to look exactly like the real thing (modern handguns and Saturday night specials).

Editor's note: Although the following is not a toy, but a game, it is included in this list as an example of the many role-playing fantasy games which are currently available. They are the subject of much discussion and controversy. Examples listed here are possible characters described in some of the handbooks. Parents should be aware of potential dangers ascribed to some role-playing games.

• **TSR Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147.**

Includes: *Dungeons and Dragons* a role-playing game in which each player assumes the identity of the character he creates. The object of the game is for the character to search for treasure through a maze of dungeons, overcoming obstacles enroute. Characters remain in the game until killed. Examples of types of characters that are promoted by various game instruction books are:

Cleric - "The cleric . . . has a limited number of attack spells. . . note that all spells must be spoken or read aloud. Another important attribute of the cleric is the ability to turn away (or actually command into service) the undead and less powerful demons and devils."

Kali (Black Earth Mother) - "Her worship requires sacrifices of blood and even an occasional human sacrifice. Her cult includes many assassins. Those sworn to defend her cult often will do so in a sort of berserk, suicidal manner, slaying all who oppose them until they themselves are slain."

Tyaa (Winged Goddess of Evil Birds) - "Only women are permitted in the high priesthood and Tyaa demands the sacrifice of body parts from her more attractive worshippers."

Auraks - The Auraks most insidious power is mind-control to control the actions of the target."

Non-human Soldiers - ". . . these evil creatures will certainly expect to loot, pillage, and rape freely at every chance, and kill (and probably eat) captives."

Toys With Non-Violent Themes

Although numerous toys of unlimited variety are available, this list will focus on categories of toys which could be appropriate alternatives to the violent toys dominating the market today and which are so widely advertised. It is recommended that parents look at all packaging and read titles, descriptions, etc., to determine play scenarios which are being suggested.

Construction toys and action toys which encourage imagination:

- **Lego Systems, Inc., Enfield, CT 06082.**

Includes: *Legoland (Spacesystem, Castlesystem, Townsystem)* for ages 6 to 12.

Expert Builder Set for ages 8 to 14.

A wide variety of possibilities and combinations are encouraged. Children enjoy playing with and creating. The graphics on the boxes are positive and peaceful. For example, the astronaut on the space set is smiling and is friendly to the robot who is meeting the spaceship—a hand is extended in a friendly gesture. Encourages warm, human perspective on creativity.

- **CBS Inc., Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17602.**

(Child Guidance Toys) includes: *Electronic Talk and Play Learning System* for ages 3½ to 10. Tape player and recorder (\$54.83 - selection of tapes and books, \$6.99).

- **Playmates, Rm. 123, Fifth Avenue., NY NY 10010.**

Includes sets of people and implements to create different work environments for ages 3 and up (\$10-\$20 each): road construction, farm set, space commander, airport, tech series, mini labs (ages 8 to adult).

- **PlaySkool, Inc., Affil. Milton Bradley Co., Chicago, IL 60651.**

Includes: *Lincoln Logs* - (\$10 to \$20) For boys and girls ages 4 to 10. Construct pioneer cabins, forts, towns and ranches.

Alphie II - (\$29.99) Computer robot, programmed to play six different activities for fun and learn-

ing. Includes matching, music, math, spelling, musical chairs and color memory game.

Bristle Blocks - (\$7.99) for ages 2 to 6. Construct endless variety of buildings with colorful plastic shapes.

• **Fisher Price, East Aurora, NY 10451.**

Includes: *Construx (Imagination series, Space series)* for ages 5 and up. Most are recommended as encouraging imagination and skill in assembly.

Power Creations and Power Pack for ages 7 and up. Set with motor or power pack to make vehicles move. Appealing to kids who want to explore making things go.

Adventure People (numerous sets of adventure people and equipment such as speed boats, camp'ers, racing equipment, etc.) for ages 4 to 9. Recommended as promoting interest in outdoors and interpersonal relationships through sharing in adventure activities. Unlimited number of other excellent toys for babies on up; e.g., crib toys, pull toys, dolls, rattles, radios, walkie-talkies, tape recorders, cameras (\$26.99 for ages 5 and up), etc. All well made and encouraging creativity.

• **Tomy Corp., 901 E. 23rd St., Carson, California 90745.**

Includes: A wide variety of computer toys, in all price ranges, for all age groups. Two examples out of 10 from \$10 to \$400 are:

Tomy Tutor Play Computer - (\$20.99) for ages 3 to 7. No batteries needed—contains twelve animated programs including dramatic play, alphabet comprehension, math comprehension, color recognition, reading/spelling comprehension, hand/eye coordination, thought process.

Omnibot 2000 - (\$350.00) "Completely programmable—has seven-day, 24-hour memory so he can remember your every need. Remote control him and he'll follow you anywhere. His articulated arm and grasping hand can hand you what you don't want to reach yourself. His cassette plays rock 'n roll or Rachmaninoff or anything in between. Requires batteries."

• **Coleco Industries, Inc., Amsterdam, NY 12010.**

Includes: *Cabbage Patch Dolls*. Extremely popular among children because of their realistic nature and individuality. They promote pro-social

values by breaking down racial and ethnic stereotypes. An even larger variety of these dolls, with astronauts, circus characters, and combable hair, came out in 1986.

• **Capsela Construction Systems, Playjour, Inc., 200 Fifth Ave., Suite 1024, NY, NY 10010.**

Includes: *A series of clear interlocking capsules* which can be used to build many varieties of working entities such as vacuum cleaners. Build land and sea models which exhibit the principles of motion using air, electric, and mechanical energy to propel them. Give youngsters a practical understanding of physics. (\$11.95 to \$119.95)

• **Community Playthings, Route 213, Rifton, NY 12471.**

Includes: *Primarily kindergarten toys*, heavy duty, made entirely of maple with one year warranty. Doll carriages, cradles, unit blocks, house-keeping, furniture, climbing gym, wheeled toys.

• **Natural Science Industries, LTD, 51-17 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Far Rockaway, NY 11691.**

Includes: *Carpentry and mechanic sets* and a variety of kits to encourage scientific enquiry: secret code, fingerprinting, butterfly collections, solar energy lab. Also colored or natural hardwood block sets, lovely reproductions of commercial fishing boats.

• **Texas HiTech, Inc., Central Park Drive/104, Oklahoma City, OK 73104.**

Includes: *Block-Tronics*. "The first electronic chemistry set." Plastic blocks with built-in components, dovetail into a connection system. There is no electrical danger and there are 5 sets of increasing complexity. The advanced set is a robot radio.

• **Parker Bros., 200 West Park Drive, Suite 360, P.O.B. 2058, Peachtree, GA 30269.**

Includes: *The construction company*. Examples are *Job No. 1000 Starter Set*, 56 pieces including tires, axles, and a plan; *Job No. 4000 Advanced Set* has 197 pieces including action pieces such as hitches, hinges, a pivot base and a winch. Building plans included. Also a variety of well-known *board games* including "Monopoly" and "Sorry," and Nerf Action Games.

• **Universal Specialties Co., 7355 W. Vickery Blvd., Forth Worth, TX 76116.**

Includes: A variety of attractive small toys, i.e., construction puzzles, tops, solar graphics, sundials, magnets, whistles, stickers, animal models.

• **Yards of Fun, P.O. Box 119, North Manchester, IN 46962.**

Includes: Durable and attractive outside play equipment, primarily constructed of wood and rope.

• **Binney and Smith, Inc., P.O. Box 431, 1100 Church Lane, Easton, PA 18042-0431. (Crayola Co.)**

Includes: Halloween Treat packs of crayons, wide variety of arts and craft kits for graphic fun. New in 1986.

• **Ideal**

Includes: *Erector Construction System* (19.99) for ages 7 and up. Builds large models of vehicles, stationary objects, and working machinery.

• **Tonka Toy Corp., Spring Park, MN 55384.**

Includes: a wide variety of *trucks* with good play value. Children can use them for hours of imaginative play.

• **Steven Manufacturing Co., 224 E. 4th St., Hermann, MO 65401.**

Includes: *Inova Home Planetarium* - Projects more than 60 different constellations on home ceilings. Great for stargazers of all ages.

Catalogs of Alternative Toys of Positive Play Value

Alternatives, 5263 Boulder Crest Rd., Ellenwood, CA 30049. A wide selection of reading materials involving stories for children, offering a way of life which is an alternative to excessive consumerism. Stresses ideas of sharing and charity according to Judeo-Christian ethic.

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024. With a subscription to the magazine *Natural History*, one is enrolled as a member of the American Museum of Natural History. Beautiful and educational gift items are available thorough the museum store, such as dinosaur books and posters, various tribal arts and crafts, and other items of interest to one who wishes to explore the world of nature and the history of humans in it.

Animal Town Games, Co., P.O. Box 2002, Santa Barbara, CA 93120. Catalog of board games about conservation, cooperation, self-sufficiency, and simple peaceful living.

Carrington-Pierce, Ltd., 26 Eastover Court, Louisville, KY 40206. Some items are a little higher in price, but there is a unique variety and there are some especially good toys for older children (ages 10 to 14). Some classic toys such as endangered species stuffed animals, Hummingbird yo-yo made of maple, Aesop's Fables coloring book, etc.

Chad's Rainbow, 2725 W. 15th, Plano, TX 75075. (Catalog free.) Also a toystore. Wide variety of developmentally sound toys for toddlers to teens. Includes blocks, musical toys and instruments, science kits, stuffed animals, magic kits. Unique and special toys.

Childcraft Education Corp., 20 Kilmer Road, Edison, NJ 08818. Offers a variety of creative and non-violent toys.

Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., 20 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458. Publishers of the excellent publication, *Faces*, for children up to age 14. Explores the world of natural science and anthropology. Ten issues per year.

Cokesbury, 201 8th Avenue, South, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202. (Catalog free.) Children's games and toys with a Christian/ biblical orientation.

Community Playthings, Rt. 213, Rifton, NY 12471. Heirloom quality, solid maple children's furniture, play ramps, blocks, carts, dolls, tractors, cranes, tools, teepees, all made to last for years. Offers free 40-page guide to selecting play equipment for early childhood education. Appropriate for day care centers and playschools as well as at home.

Constructive Playthings, 1227 East 119th St., Grandview, MO 64030. Curriculum materials, supplies, and equipment for infant, pre-school, elementary and special education. Aimed mostly toward teacher and day-care directors, but available to all. Very sturdy toys of wide-ranging play values.

Co-op America/Alternative Catalogue, 2100 M St., N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. Non-profit association that links socially and environmentally responsible businesses and individuals together in a national network. Catalogue contains unusual gifts mostly for adults; has all-cotton T-shirts and clothing for children. Also interesting games and toys for children.

Discovery Toys, 400 Ellinwood Way, Suite 300, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. Developmentally guided toys available through home "toy parties." Write national office for list of local distributors. These toys are very inexpensive, well-made and beautiful, as well as creative. Have nice toys for older children as well as for tiny tots.

Edmund Scientific Company, 101 Gloucester Pike, Barrington, New Jersey 08007. Excellent quality in real scientific materials such as telescopes, microscopes, blimps, optical lenses, prisms, earth and celestial globes, handbooks, maps, posters, slides, electrical and solar-powered kits and scientific kits of many other kinds—for adults as well as children.

Family Pastimes, R.R. 4, Perth, Ontario, Canada K7H 3C6. Specialize in cooperative games. Write for list of selections.

Global Learning, Inc., 40 So. Fullerton Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042. For difficult to find cooperative video and computer games, this company offers a selection.

Lillian Vernon, 510 So. Fulton Ave., Mount Vernon, New York 10550. Not a toy catalog *per se*, but has an increasingly wide variety of quality, inexpensive toy/gift items for children. Offers real

tools, artist's color pencils, easel, personalized bath towels, etc.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Presents for Children, 255 Gracie Station, New York, NY. Catalogue and Museum Shop.

National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-2266. Catalog of cards and gifts (delightful for adult nature lovers), has a brief selection of dinosaur models, books, T-shirts, as well as fluffy puppets and a 30X illuminated pocket microscope for those trips to the mountains, desert, or just around the yard.

OxFam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. An international agency that funds self-help development projects and disaster relief in countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Also prepares and distributes educational materials on issues of development and hunger. Has an excellent selection of storybooks for children from around the world. Many are bilingual. All contributions are tax deductible.

Pueblo to People (Crafts and Creative Alternatives in Central America), 5218 Chenevert, No. 1016, Houston, TX 77004; 713/523-1197. A non-profit organization that has several toys for children and gift items for adults which are hand-crafted by the poor of under-developed countries. An opportunity to promote social justice through purchasing power.

S&S Arts and Crafts, Colchester, CT 06415. An arts and crafts selection for wide range of ages. New ideas for therapy, education and recreation.

Science 85, December Issue. A science magazine featuring a 7-page section on toys, software and books that are not only lots of fun, but which also provide a learning experience. Some good ideas for older children (and parents). Especially good for children interested in natural science (look up in library).

Sierra, November/December 1985 issue. *Sierra Club*, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. The magazine of the Sierra Club has a section on children's books for nature lovers. The illustrations are lovely. Also has wonderful nature and animal calendars, some with stickers, that any child (or teenager) would love.

Smart Toys, 1655 Keeler, Wichita Falls, TX 76308. Top quality, all wood, attractive, educational; many hand-made and carefully researched

before production. Also some commercial toys of same high standard.

Toys for Peace, 205 E. Leeland Hgts. Blvd., Lehigh Acres, FL 33936 (or contact Sue Spencer, President, Apt. 101, 2401 2nd St., Eagle Pass, TX 78852; 512/773-4148. An organization of people who are positively concerned about the patterning of the imagination of children in the area of peace-making. As there is a serious gap in this area (no role models from TV), *Toys for Peace* has produced a selection of very special toys which introduce children to the concept of peacemaking through everyday playthings. Items such as "Ring Toss for Peace" and the "Diplomat Doll" are available. Write for a list of other toys.

Toys to Grow On, P.O. Box 17, Long Beach, CA 90801. (More than just a catalogue.) Wonderful assortment of playthings, books, arts and creative items, scientific discovery things, building kits, etc. A real feast for the eyes. Each page has helpful hints about children and play. The back of the order form is a newsletter, "Toy Times," which has news, household hints, and other things of interest to parents.

U.S. Committee for UNICEF, 331 E. 38th St., New York, NY 10016. Toys, records, greeting cards, calendars, storybooks, puzzles, flags, etc., which promote understanding of different cultures and encourage friendship among children of the nations of the world.

World Library Publications, Inc., 5040 N. Ravenwood, Chicago, IL 60640. Listed because of excellent children's music from them. Specifically, "Make a Wonderful Noise" by Jack Miffleton; and assortment of God/Creation-centered tunes which are filled with the wonder of the world. Also have little dance and rhythm band suggestions in the accompanying songbooks.

Local Museum Shops. Don't forget to check you local natural history and art museums for shops with interesting, exciting and exotic gifts for children and show support for your local museum while doing it!

Positive Parental Action

1. Know what your child is watching on TV; plan TV viewing.
2. Become a participant in your child's choice of

toys and be willing to say no if you disapprove.

3. Write to the toy companies and express your opinion about their product. They are in business to make a profit and they do that by pleasing you, the consumer.

4. Take advantage of resources, e.g., The Toy Project in Wichita Falls, TX, the National Coalition on TV Violence in Champaign, IL or Action for Children's Television in Cambridge, MA.

5. As there are currently no requirements regarding children's TV programming, support such legislation as Rep. Wirth's (Colorado) and Sen. Lautenberg's (New Jersey), which would require every broadcaster to televise one hour of positive children's programming each day (H.R. 32-16; the Lautenberg-Wirth Bill). Write your Congressional Representatives and ask them to support such legislation.

6. Share your concerns with grandparents, friends, neighbors, schools and churches. Get active!

Resources and Organizations

—*Action for Children's Television*, 20 University Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138; 617/876-6620.

—*Alternatives*, 5263 Boulder Crest Road, Ellenwood, GA 30049.

—*Association of Childhood Education International*, 11141 Georgea Ave., No. 200, Wheaton, MD 20902; 301/942-2443.

—*Child's Play Resource Guide*, The Peace Museum, 430 W. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60601; 312/440-1860.

—*The National Coalition on Television Violence*, P.O. Box 2157, Champaign, IL 61820; 217/348-1920, or 144 East End Ave., N.Y., NY 10128; 212/535-7275.

—*The International Association of the Child's Right to Play*, Mr. Sven Borsche, c/o Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e. V., Postfach 1149, 5300 Bonn 1, West Germany, or IPA Resources, 12 Cherry Tree Dr., Sheffield S119AE, U.K., or Donna Seline, USA National Representative, 1700 N. Lilac Dr. Golden Valley MN 55422.

—*Parenting for Peace and Justice*, 3133 Lindell, No. 400, St. Louis, MO 63108.

—*The Peace Resource Center of San Diego*, 5717 Lindo Passo, San Diego, CA 92115; 619/265-0730.

—*The Toy Project*, 3308 Kemp, Wichita Falls, TX 76308; 817/691-6001.

—*Media & Values*, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034; 213/559-2944.

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